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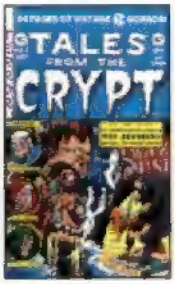

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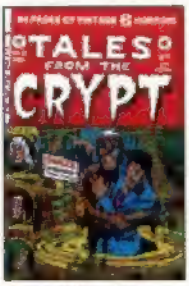

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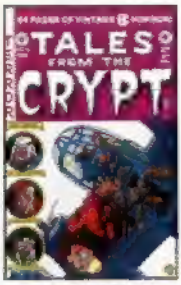

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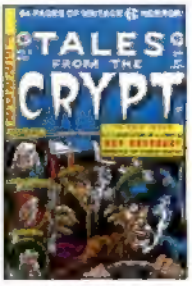

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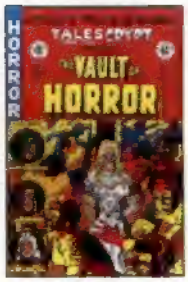

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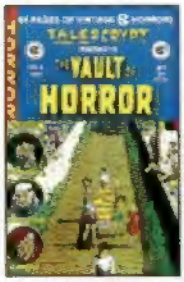

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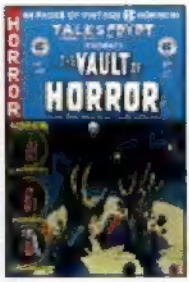


RCP VAULT #3

RCP VAULT #4

RCP VAULT #6

EAST COAST #11

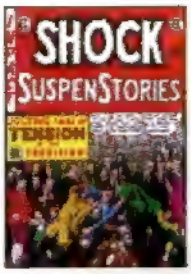
RCP HAUNT #1

RCP HAUNT #2

RCP HAUNT #3

RCP HAUNT #4

RCP HAUNT #6



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POISON!

SOUTHERN
LUXURY
BONDED
THE MOURNERS IN THE CEMETERY WERE SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE MUFFLED SOBS THAT OCCASIONALLY INTERRUPTED THE WHISPERS OF THE DRIZZLING RAIN. I STOOD AT THE HEAD OF THE GROUP WITH ELSA, MY HOUSEKEEPER, AT MY SIDE. WE WERE ATTENDING THE FUNERAL OF MY WIFE!

THE MINISTER BEGAN HIS EULOGY... AND WE STOOD THERE AS THE SOAKING RAIN SEEPED THROUGH OUR CLOTHES AND CHILLED US TO THE BONE. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TAKE MY EYES FROM THE CASKET...

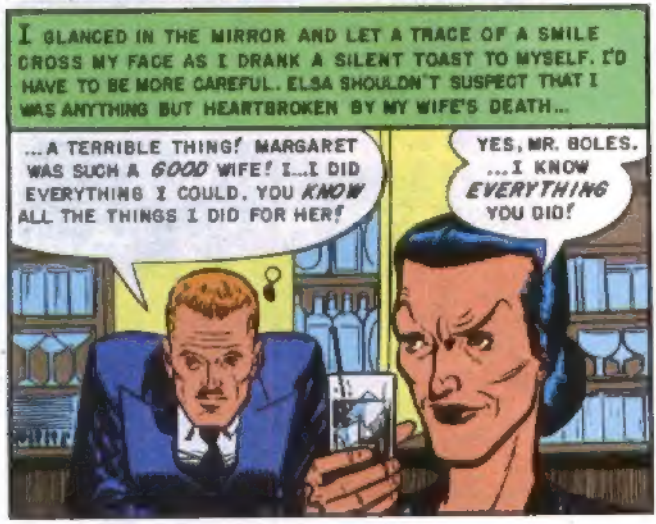
I LOOKED AT ELSA. HER HEAD WAS BOWED AND SHE GRIPPED MY ARM TIGHTLY. A SINGLE TEAR ROLLED DOWN HER FACE... OR WAS IT A RAINDROP?

I SHIVERED FROM THE COLD. THE EULOGY WAS FINISHED NOW...AND AS THE CASKET WAS LOWERED INTO THE YAWNING GRAVE, I COULD HARDLY KEEP FROM...SMILING!

YES, MY FACE WAS A MASK, BUT DEEP INSIDE I ROARED WITH LAUGHTER! WHY SHOULDN'T I? IT WAS OVER NOW. I COULD LAUGH NOW. I HAD KILLED MY WIFE WITH *POISON*...HAD COMMITTED THE PERFECT MURDER...AND NO ONE KNEW! *NO ONE KNEW!*

ELSA AND I DROVE HOME IN SILENCE. ONCE THERE, I WENT DIRECTLY TO MY LIQUOR CABINET AND POURED US BOTH A DRINK...

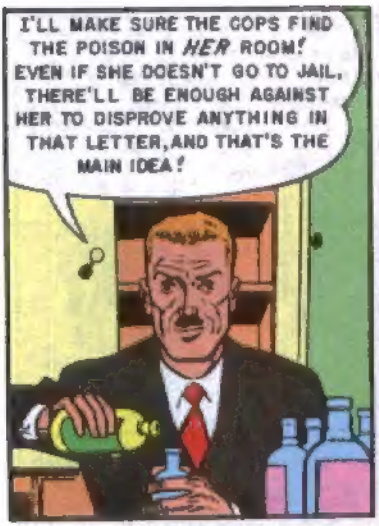
I GLANCED IN THE MIRROR AND LET A TRACE OF A SMILE CROSS MY FACE AS I DRANK A SILENT TOAST TO MYSELF. I'D HAVE TO BE MORE CAREFUL. ELSA SHOULDN'T SUSPECT THAT I WAS ANYTHING BUT HEARTBROKEN BY MY WIFE'S DEATH...


...A TERRIBLE THING! MARGARET WAS SUCH A *GOOD* WIFE! I...I DID EVERYTHING I COULD. YOU *KNOW* ALL THE THINGS I DID FOR HER!
YES, MR. BOLES. ...I KNOW *EVERYTHING* YOU DID!

WHAT HAD SHE MEANT, SHE KNEW EVERYTHING I DID? HAD I MADE A MISTAKE SOMEWHERE?
RIDICULOUS! HOW COULD SHE POSSIBLY KNOW? HEH! JUST MY NERVES ACTING UP...
I FELT CERTAIN I WAS SAFE. BUT NONETHELESS I STAYED IN THE STUDY UNTIL DINNER...
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF... AH... LEAVING, NOW THAT MARGARET... ISN'T HERE!
OH, NO... BUT I AM THINKING ABOUT WRITING A BOOK!
WRITING A BOOK? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WANTED TO WRITE! WHAT TYPE OF BOOK WILL IT BE?
A MURDER MYSTERY!
FEAR RAN THROUGH ME LIKE A HIGH-VOLTAGE CURRENT! THE TONE OF HER VOICE WHEN SHE SAID IT... THE LOOK IN HER EYES...
MR. BOLES... YOU HAVEN'T FINISHED EATING!
I... I'M NOT HUNGRY!
SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY, I RAN TO THE STUDY AND POURED MYSELF A DRINK...
SHE DOES KNOW! BUT HOW? HOW COULD SHE KNOW?
NO... WAIT! I'M... I'M LETTING MY NERVES RUN AWAY WITH ME. I STILL CAN'T BE POSITIVE!
I HAD TO BE CERTAIN! I RETURNED TO THE TABLE. ELSA WAS SITTING THERE, DRINKING HER COFFEE AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED!
THAT... THAT BOOK YOU'RE GOING TO WRITE. WHAT'S THE PLOT ABOUT?
OH, THAT? WELL, IT'S ABOUT A MAN WHO MURDERS HIS WIFE... WITH POISON!
I SAT ROOTED TO THE CHAIR AS SHE RELATED THE PLOT OF HER 'BOOK', FOLLOWING IN EXACT DETAIL THE METHOD IN WHICH I HAD KILLED MY WIFE! THERE WERE NO DOUBTS NOW. SHE KNEW! ELSA KNEW I MURDERED MY WIFE!
... AND THAT'S THE STORY, MR. BOLES. DON'T YOU THINK IT SOUNDS... TRUE TO LIFE?
3

WE STARED AT EACH OTHER, MY THOUGHTS RACING MADLY! IF SHE KNEW I KILLED MARGARET, WHY HADN'T SHE TOLD THE POLICE? WHAT WAS SHE UP TO?
...INCIDENTALLY, MR. BOLES... DON'T YOU THINK I SHOULD RECEIVE A RAISE IN PAY? ...A LARGE RAISE?
SO THAT WAS IT! BLACKMAIL! SHE WANTED MONEY IN RETURN FOR HER SILENCE! AND I WAS HELPLESS TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...
YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION, MR. BOLES!
WHAT? OH... YES! YES. I'LL SEE THAT YOU GET A RAISE!
THAT WAS THE BEGINNING... A RAISE IN SALARY. BUT IT DIDN'T STOP THERE...
MY ROOM LOOKS TERRIBLE! DON'T YOU THINK IT SHOULD BE REDECORATED, MR. BOLES?
OF COURSE, ELSA... IF YOU THINK SO!
IT WENT ON AND ON... AND I COULDN'T STOP HER! THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO!
IT'S GETTING SO COLD OUT, NOW. I CERTAINLY COULD USE A NEW COAT, MR. BOLES... A MINK COAT!
IT'S SO TIRING TO USE BUSES AND SUBWAYS, MR. BOLES! I WISH I HAD A BRAND-NEW SHINY CAR!
AS LONG AS I GAVE HER WHAT SHE WANTED, I WAS SAFE! BUT IF IT KEPT UP LONG ENOUGH, I'D GO BROKE! AND WHAT WOULD KEEP HER FROM TALKING THEN?
THIS CAN'T GO ON ANY LONGER. I'VE GOT TO PUT AN END TO IT! AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY... ELSA MUST DIE!
YES, ELSA HAD TO DIE! IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I WOULD BE COMPLETELY SAFE! BUT EVEN IN THAT I FOUND HER PREPARED...
...NO, I'M NOT AFRAID ANYTHING WILL HAPPEN TO ME! I HAVE PLENTY OF... 'INSURANCE'!
OH?
4

YES, I HAVE LOADS OF...ER... 'INSURANCE'! ALL IN A LETTER TUCKED AWAY IN MY SAFETY-DEPOSIT VAULT...TO BE OPENED ONLY IN THE EVENT OF MY DEATH!
...THINKS SHE'S PRETTY SMART! WELL, I'LL SHOW HER... I'LL SHOW HER! THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A CAT!
I CAN'T KILL HER! THAT LETTER IN HER VAULT TELLS ALL ABOUT HOW I MURDERED MARGARET! BUT MAYBE... SAY... I HAVE IT!
I...ER...I THINK I'LL GO FOR A DRIVE, ELSA! I WANT TO GET SOME CIGARETTES!
CERTAINLY, MR. BOLES! TONIGHT'S MY NIGHT OFF, SO I MAY NOT BE HERE WHEN YOU RETURN!
HER NIGHT OFF... JUST WHAT I WANTED! I DROVE ACROSS TOWN AND BOUGHT MORE OF THE SAME POISON WITH WHICH I HAD KILLED MY WIFE. BY THE TIME I GOT BACK, THE ENTIRE PLAN WAS COMPLETE IN MY MIND.
ELSA? ELSA! YOU HERE?
I SEARCHED THE HOUSE TO MAKE SURE SHE WAS GONE, AND THEN WENT TO THE LIQUOR CABINET BEHIND THE BAR...
SHE'LL NEVER GET WISE TO THIS! WHEN THE TIME COMES, I'LL TAKE JUST ENOUGH OF THIS POISON TO MAKE ME SICK. THEN I'LL SAY SHE TRIED TO POISON ME!
WHEN I HAVE HER ARRESTED, SHE'LL BRING OUT THAT LETTER SHE HAS IN HER VAULT, INCRIMINATING ME! AND WHEN THE COPS FIND MY WIFE WAS POISONED, I'LL CLAIM THAT ELSA MURDERED HER TOO!
DANGER
POISO
9

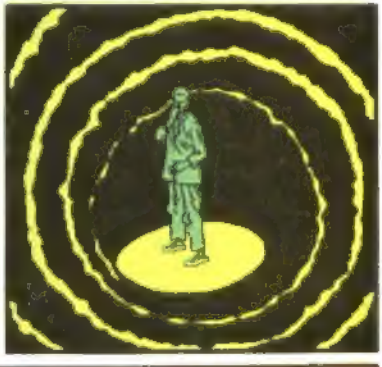

I'LL MAKE SURE THE COPS FIND THE POISON IN *HER* ROOM! EVEN IF SHE DOESN'T GO TO JAIL, THERE'LL BE ENOUGH AGAINST HER TO DISPROVE ANYTHING IN THAT LETTER, AND THAT'S THE MAIN IDEA!

I WENT TO BED BUT I COULDN'T SLEEP. A STORM WAS RAGING OUTSIDE AND I LISTENED TO THE HOWLING WIND AND DRIVING RAIN... UNTIL ELSA RETURNED...

SUDDENLY I HAD AN IDEA! TONIGHT WAS PERFECT FOR MY PLAN. HER NIGHT OFF TO GIVE HERSELF AN 'ALIBI'... TELEPHONE OUT OF ORDER... *PERFECT!*

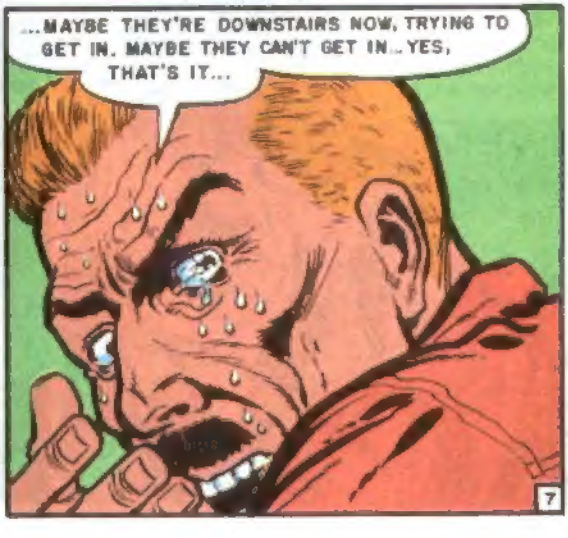
ON SECOND THOUGHT, ELSA, I *DO* FEEL VERY SICK! DO YOU THINK YOU COULD WALK TO THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE TO GET HIM?
...BUT IT'S SUCH A *TERRIBLE STORM!* I... OH, ALL RIGHT! YOU *DO* LOOK PRETTY BAD...

I SWALLOWED THE POISON. IN A SHORT WHILE I FELT ITS EFFECTS. I WAITED FOR ELSA TO RETURN WITH THE DOCTOR, PRAYING THAT THEY WOULD HURRY! BUT TIME PASSED AND THEY DIDN'T ARRIVE...



I BEGAN TO HAVE MISGIVINGS! SUPPOSE ELSA HAD GONE TO THE POLICE INSTEAD? THE HOURS WENT BY AND I WAS NEARLY GOING *CRAZY* WITH FEAR!

MY BRAIN REELED AND THE FLOOR SWAYED BENEATH ME! NEEDLES OF PAIN STABBED MY BODY... I TREMBLED VIOLENTLY...
WHERE ARE THEY? *WHERE ARE THEY?* WHY DON'T THEY COME?



THEY CAN'T GET IN...CAN'T GET IN! I'LL LET THEM IN! I'LL GO DOWN AND LET THEM IN!
OHH-H-H...MY...MY LEG! IT'S...IT'S BROKEN! BROKEN! THE PAIN! I... I CAN'T STAND THE PAIN! CAN'T MOVE...CAN'T...
MY LEG HAD BEEN SNAPPED BY MY FALL! I LAY THERE, MOTIONLESS, FOR A LONG TIME...GASPING FOR EVERY BREATH...THE AGONY WRACKING MY BODY. THEN I SLIPPED OFF INTO THE ABYSMAL DEPTHS OF DARKNESS...
FINALLY THE BLACKNESS BEGAN TO CLEAR. I COULD DISCERN VAGUE SHADOWS... AND I HEARD VOICES AS IF FROM FAR AWAY. SOMETHING BURNED MY MOUTH AND THROAT.
WILL HE BE ALL RIGHT?
HAD A NASTY FALL... PRETTY BAD SHAPE, BUT HE'LL BE OKAY!
THE VOICES WERE NEARER NOW AND THE SHADOWS BEGAN TO CLEAR. IT WAS ELSA...ELSA AND THE DOCTOR! THANK HEAVEN HE HAD COME! I HAD BEEN SAVED!
HE'S COMING OUT OF IT NOW. ATTABOY... YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, NOW, MR. BOLES!
I WAS ALL RIGHT. BUT...SOMEHOW I WASN'T ALL RIGHT! THE PAIN I FELT BEFORE WAS NOTHING WHEN COMPARED WITH THE PAIN I FELT NOW! AND IT WAS CREEPING THROUGH MY WHOLE BODY... BURNING, CONVULSING ME! IT WAS GETTING WORSE AND WORSE! WHAT WAS WRONG?!
I WAS WORRIED FOR AWHILE, MR. BOLES...HAD A TOUGH TIME BRINGING YOU AROUND! IT TOOK TWO WHOLE TUMBLERS OF YOUR WHISKEY TO FIX YOU UP!
THE END

MIDNIGHT! A CITY SLEEPS! ONLY THE STREETLIGHTS REMAIN LIT! AND NOW IS THE TIME THAT ALL THE NIGHT-LIFE STIRS! ROACHES CRAWL OUT OF CRACKS, AND RATS SCURRY ACROSS PACKED GARBAGE CANS! A COUPLE HURRIES HOME THROUGH THE PARK FROM A PARTY! AND DEEP IN THE SHADOWS, A SHORT-CORD WRAPPED IN HIS PLANS, WAITING OFF TO THE SIDE OF THE PATH, IS...

THE GIGGLING KILLER

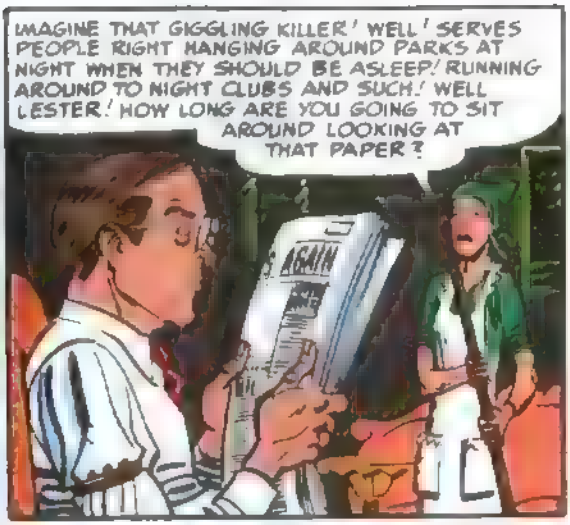
HIHEEEHEEE' HEEEH!H'

OH, JOHN' WHY DID WE HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE PARK' YOU KNOW THE HORRIBLE STORIES IN THE PAPERS TODAY'

YOU MEAN THE STORIES ABOUT THAT 'GIGGLING KILLER'? LOOK HONEY' IN A CITY THIS SIZE, YOU'VE GOT A BETTER CHANCE OF BEING HIT BY A CAR THAN BEING STRANGLED BY THAT KILLER'

BESIDES... IT'S A SHORTER CUT THROUGH THE PARK, AND WE DO WANT TO GET HO...
JOHN!
UK!
HIHEEEHEEE! HEEEHEE! HIHEEHEEE!
POLICE! POLICE!
UK! URK
HE'S AFTER ME!
WHERE AM I?
THIS ROAD MUST LEAD OUT!
DEAD END!
STAY AWAY!
HIHEEE HEEE! HEE HEE HEE!
YEEEEE...
CLAK!
CLAK!
LOOKS LIKE THE GIGGLING STRANGLER'S BEEN HERE!
YEP! HE'S DRAWN A TRIANGLE WITH A LIPSTICK ON HIS VICTIM'S HEADS AS USUAL!

Morning
GIGGLING KILLER STRIK
COUPLE STRANGLED
GREENVIEW PARK!
DISTRICT ATTORNEY DEMANDS BROAD INVESTIGATION!


IMAGINE THAT GIGGLING KILLER! WELL! SERVES PEOPLE RIGHT HANGING AROUND PARKS AT NIGHT WHEN THEY SHOULD BE ASLEEP! RUNNING AROUND TO NIGHT CLUBS AND SUCH! WELL LESTER! HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO SIT AROUND LOOKING AT THAT PAPER?

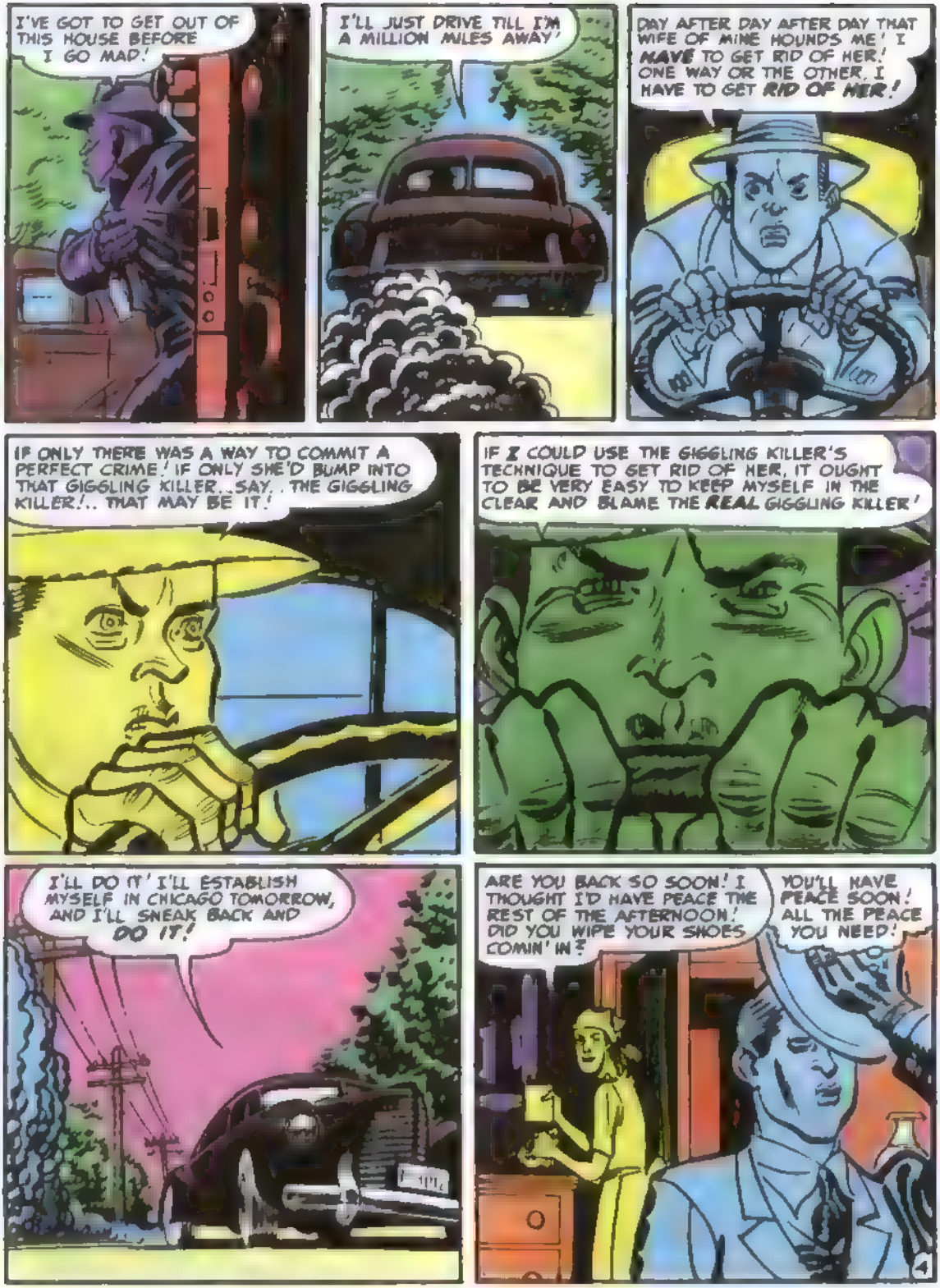
A BODY'D THINK YOU'D BE OF SOME HELP AROUND THE HOUSE INSTEAD OF SITTING IN YOUR EASY CHAIR WHILE I WORK!

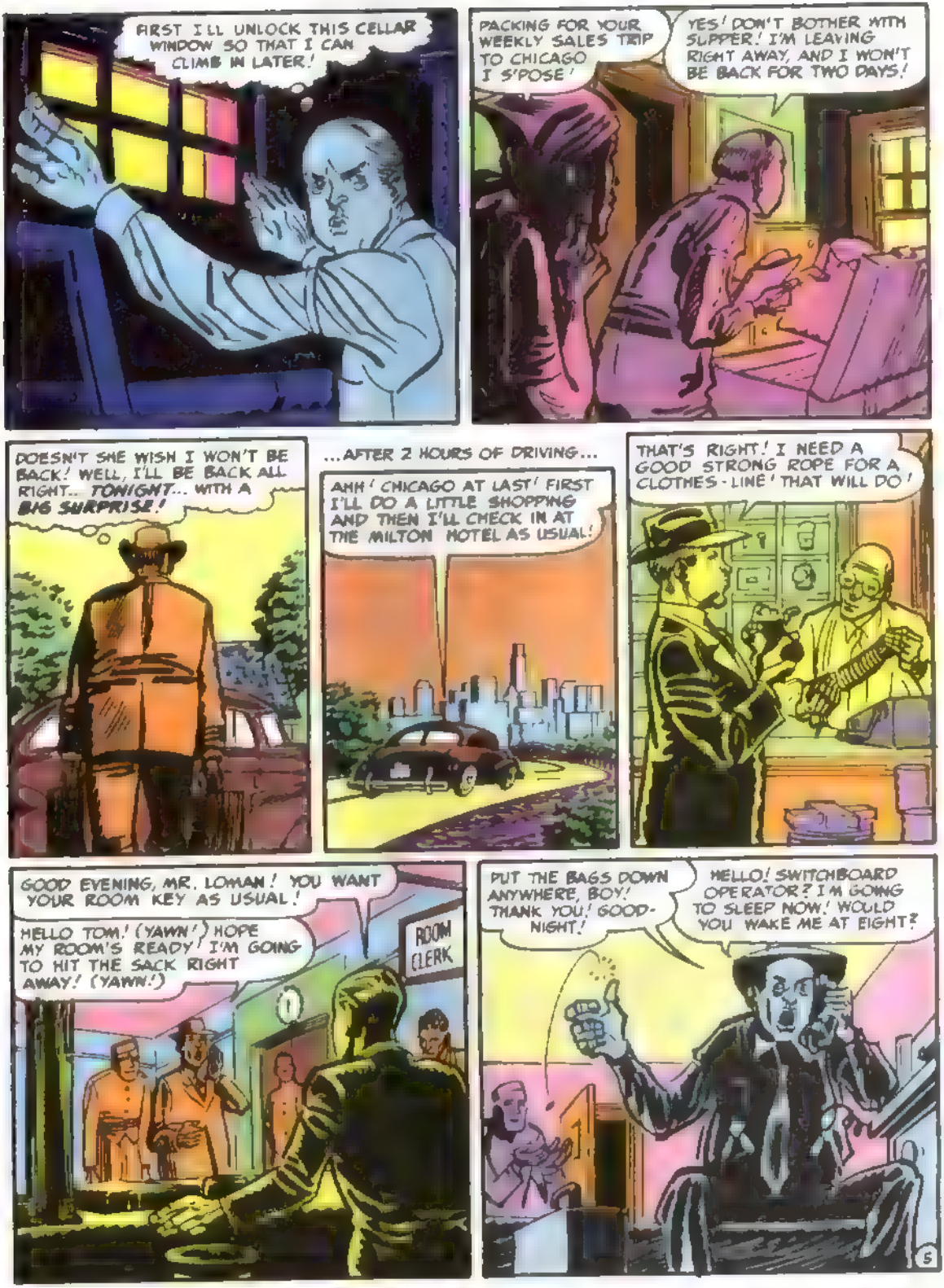
ALL I DO IS PICK UP YOUR THINGS ALL DAY! WOULD THINK YOU D.. AT LEAST THROW YOUR OWN SOCKS INTO THE HAMPER!

IF YOU WON'T BE ANY HELP AROUND THE HOUSE, AT LEAST GET OUT OF THE WAY SO THAT I CAN SWEEP!

NAG! NAG! NAG!

OH! NAG, NAG, NAG, IT IS NOW! YOU COMPLAINED ENOUGH ABOUT MY MEAL! WHY DON'T YOU GO TO A RESTAURANT TO EAT! GO AHEAD TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IF YOU WANT SILENCE!
OH LORD! THAT WOMAN


I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS HOUSE BEFORE I GO MAD!
I'LL JUST DRIVE TILL I'M A MILLION MILES AWAY!
DAY AFTER DAY AFTER DAY THAT WIFE OF MINE HOUNDS ME! I HAVE TO GET RID OF HER! ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, I HAVE TO GET RID OF HER!
IF ONLY THERE WAS A WAY TO COMMIT A PERFECT CRIME! IF ONLY SHE'D BUMP INTO THAT GIGGLING KILLER..SAY.. THE GIGGLING KILLER!.. THAT MAY BE IT!
IF I COULD USE THE GIGGLING KILLER'S TECHNIQUE TO GET RID OF HER, IT OUGHT TO BE VERY EASY TO KEEP MYSELF IN THE CLEAR AND BLAME THE REAL GIGGLING KILLER!
I'LL DO IT! I'LL ESTABLISH MYSELF IN CHICAGO TOMORROW, AND I'LL SNEAK BACK AND DO IT!
ARE YOU BACK SO SOON! I THOUGHT I'D HAVE PEACE THE REST OF THE AFTERNOON! DID YOU WIPE YOUR SHOES COMIN' IN?
YOU'LL HAVE PEACE SOON! ALL THE PEACE YOU NEED!


FIRST I'LL UNLOCK THIS CELLAR WINDOW SO THAT I CAN CLIMB IN LATER!
PACKING FOR YOUR WEEKLY SALES TRIP TO CHICAGO I S'POSE!
YES! DON'T BOTHER WITH SUPPER! I'M LEAVING RIGHT AWAY, AND I WON'T BE BACK FOR TWO DAYS!
DOESN'T SHE WISH I WON'T BE BACK! WELL, I'LL BE BACK ALL RIGHT... TONIGHT... WITH A BIG SURPRISE!
...AFTER 2 HOURS OF DRIVING...
AHH! CHICAGO AT LAST! FIRST I'LL DO A LITTLE SHOPPING AND THEN I'LL CHECK IN AT THE MILTON HOTEL AS USUAL!
THAT'S RIGHT! I NEED A GOOD STRONG ROPE FOR A CLOTHES-LINE! THAT WILL DO!
GOOD EVENING, MR. LOMAN! YOU WANT YOUR ROOM KEY AS USUAL!
HELLO TOM! (YAWN!) HOPE MY ROOM'S READY! I'M GOING TO HIT THE SACK RIGHT AWAY! (YAWN!)
ROOM CLERK
PUT THE BAGS DOWN ANYWHERE, BOY! THANK YOU! GOOD-NIGHT!
HELLO! SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR? I'M GOING TO SLEEP NOW! WOULD YOU WAKE ME AT EIGHT?
5

EVERYONE THINKS I'M ASLEEP! NOW! DOWN THE BACK STAIRS! FIVE MINUTES TO CATCH THE NINE O'CLOCK EXPRESS TO METROPOLIS!
SO FAR, SO GOOD! NOBODY HAS SEEN ME!
PERFECT TIMING! MY CAR WILL STAY AT THE MILTON HOTEL GARAGE ALL NIGHT AND NO ONE WILL SUSPECT A THING!
BOARD!
...2 HOURS LATER, METROPOLIS!
STREETS DESERTED! PERFECT! LIGHTS ON IN THE LIVING ROOM! SHE'S PROBABLY WATCHING THE LAST SHOW ON THE TELEVISION SET!... HAVE I GOT MY ROPE? PERFECT!
NOW I'LL LET MYSELF IN THROUGH THE CELLAR WINDOW THAT I OPENED BEFORE..
THERE!
NOW, YOU WITCH! YOUR TIME HAS COME! SOON, I'LL BE RID OF YOU FOREVER!
I MUSTN'T FORGET TO GIGGLE, LOUD, SO THAT THE NEIGHBORS CAN HEAR!
HA HA!
HEE! HEE!
HEE! HA HA
HEE HEE!

THERE! IT'S DONE! RIGHT DOWN TO THE LIPSTICK MARKING! NOW! BACK ON THE TRAIN TO CHICAGO!
THEN TO SNEAK INTO MY HOTEL ROOM!
TICKETS PLEASE!
TWO O'CLOCK AND I'M BACK IN MY HOTEL ROOM! I'LL EVEN GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!
302
RRRING
WHOZAT? OPERATOR? YOU'RE WAKING ME UP? YES I HAD A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP! A FINE SLEEP! THANK YOU!
WHAT A MORNING! NO MORE WIFE .. AND WHEN THEY FIND HER, THEY'LL BLAME THE GIGGLER! NOW I'LL PAY MY REGULAR CALLS OUTSIDE CHICAGO HERE! SAY, THERE'S A HITCH-HIKER! I'LL GIVE HIM A LIFT!
I CAN USE HIM LATER TO TESTIFY THAT I WAS MAKING MY USUAL BUSINESS TRIP!
HOW FAR YOU GOING, SON!
I'M GOING FAR AS DESE WOODS HERE! COULDJA STOP DA CAR BY DESE WOODS, MISTA?
UH-OH! JUST AS MY 'HAPPY-LIFE-WITHOUT-A-WIFE' STARTS, I RUN INTO THIS NUT! WELL! I'LL GET RID OF HIM QUICKLY!
O.K., KID! HERE YOU ARE! ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WANT ME TO STOP IN THIS DESERTED NECK OF THE COUNTRY!
SQUEE!
HIHEEEHEEEEHEEE! YOU'LL FIND OUT MISTA! HIHEEEEEHEEEEEHEEEEEEHEEE! HEEEEHEEEHEEEHEEEHEEE!
7

AND THIS WAS AS FAR AS MR LOMAN'S "HAPPY-LIFE-WITHOUT-A-WIFE" WENT!

Dear Russ Cochran,

I've always believed MAD to be the best magazine in print, so when I noticed an EC comic on the stand I gave it a look. Now I know what is the best COMIC in print.

I had always been encouraged to read as a child and as an adult I read constantly. Comics are the finest incentive to start children reading, and comics should be welcome in every house, school and library.

If I was a teacher, EC would be classroom material, right along with "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "The Catcher in the Rye," and many other great works which are foolishly being removed from our schools' bookshelves. It is a shame how censorship pulled the plug on some of America's finest literary masterpieces, EC Comics. Thanks for bringing them back.

I have one more comment, concerning CRIME. I love the realism and believability of the stories. But in "Death's Double-Cross," Ruth was almost finished off by a safe falling from a building. Come on! Did a safe ever really fall from a building? Well, after all, this is a comic book, and made by the same people that did MAD!

Joseph Seesler
Chicago, IL

Safes (and pianos) used to fall from buildings in comics, cartoons and movies because writers were familiar with the big city (NYC, principally) practice of sending these large items up to high stories on the outside of the building in the days of dinkier elevators.

Fun to think about, huh? Tons of steel, hanging over the heads of innocent pedestrians? An irresistible dramatic device!

Keep a'readin'!

Dear Mr. Cochran,

I was fascinated by CRIME #1. I am intrigued and totally absorbed in these excellent 1950 comics. They really make me think, although it is difficult for me, as a comic-reading Scotsman born in '54, to place these excellent and unique comics in the social context of 50s America, which I've read about but have no experience of.

"Murder May Boomerang" seems to me to reflect a cruel world. The lives of a hard-working man and his hard-working son are ruined by crime and they themselves are turned into criminals. "Death's Double-Cross" shows the dark, evil side of human psychology lurking beneath the facade of, and possible caused by, the sacred institutions of work and marriage. The art by the late (great) Wally Wood in this one is excellent. "Snapshot of Death!" is an absolute classic, with its seedy, smoke-filled poolrooms. The artwork by Graham Ingels is astonishing. This one had me on the edge of my seat, wondering how it would end. "High Tide!" drawn by Harvey Kurtzman, is another winner. Many thanks for reprinting this amazing comic.

Here is my own mini-comic tribute to William M. Gaines: It took me a wee while to find a copy. It was well worth tracking down.

A MOMENT'S REFLECTION
IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT. I JUST HAD TO GO INTO A BAKER'S SHOP TO GET A HOT STEAK PIE TO EAT.
BUT HOW DO I TALK TO HER? I GOT THAT ALL FANCY MEB. IT SEEMS SO TYPICAL, THINKING OF TRYING TO CHAT UP A GIRL WHO WORKS IN THE BAKERS' SHOP BUT SHE'S SO NICE.
I CAN'T BE THE CHATTING UP KIT. WHAT THE HELL? AND ANYWAY WHAT DO I SAY? DO I REALLY TAKE THESE ROMANTIC FEELINGS ABOUT HER SERIOUSLY?
I TRY TO TELL MYSELF THAT I'M NOT A TYPICAL WOMANISING PICKUP BUT DON'T THEY ALL THINK THAT SAME THING JUST TO KID THEMSELVES
SO HERE WE ARE AGAIN, ANOTHER DAY. I DECIDE TO GO OUT TO THE BAKERS FOR A HOT STEAK PIE FOR BREAKFAST BUT I GO TO THE MIRROR IN THE BATHROOM TO CHECK ON MY APPEARANCE FIRST
I THINK I NEED A DIFFERENT TACKET.
THE END

I've just read the amazing 2nd issue of CRIME in the small hours of the morning. The front cover is a 'corker'. It's really eye-catching. I've read plenty EC horror and SF but these strips are totally new to me. I'm fixated on them. They're a breath of fresh air (or chilly night air) in these days of trendy superhero comics and muscle-bound X-Hulks. My favorite strip in CRIME #2 is "Contract for Death". Every panel is a masterpiece. The ending really grabbed me by the

collar. "A Moment of Madness" is a grim tale, straightforward and pessimistic. The ending of "The Corpse in the Crematorium" really threw me. I was convinced that the poor guy was going to get frazzled in the furnace. The late Mr Gaines was (I should say IS, as his work lives on) a master of dramatic irony. The comics he scripted and published are recognized as innovative and revolutionary for good reason. They're as readable today as they were back in the 50s. Your excellent standard of printing does these classic comics justice.

I see you're reprinting SHOCK. I haven't seen one in the comic shop yet. I'll ask about it next time I'm in. Last week I read "A Haunt of Fears: The strange history of the British Horror Comics campaign" by Martin Barker (Pluto Press, London/Sydney). Highly recommended if you haven't read it but you probably have. It's still in print.

John Miller
Edinburgh, SCOTLAND

If it takes you a wee while to find a wee comic (which "wee've" run at 100% of the size you provided) would it take you a large while to find a large one?

I have a run of X-HULK. My favorite sequence was "Mighty Like an Apocalypse: Death Before Dangnation!", the multi-parter which concluded in a completely different title.

Dear Mr. Cochran,

I thought I'd drop you a line to tell you how much I really love your comics. I especially like CRIME and TWO-FISTED, but also really enjoy your horror and Sci-Fi titles. Issue 2 of CRIME had two really great stories; "Dead Ringer" and "Contract For Death." I've been getting all of your titles ever since the first 64-pager but have to say that I like the new format much more. It really gives you the feeling of the originals. I'm lucky enough to own a few originals. Finally, I think that your comics are the best on the market. Some of my friends buy other comics put out by various companies but I can't see why. The artwork is lousy and the stories are pretty bad too. I've succeeded in hooking two of my friends on your comics but some still won't believe that yours are the greatest.

Kevin Paine
Solvay, NY

Remember to let them nibble a bite or two before setting the hook.

Dear Russ,

I was saddened when I learned ECs aren't selling too well. The chronological reprint series is one of the most innovative ideas ever.

The CRIME stories have all the elements of the more popular horror and sci-fi books. I am starting to prefer them. The four in #2 all were masterpieces, with beautiful artwork. My favorite story was easily "Contract For Death". While the Craig artwork was my favorite in the issue, Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein's story was outrageous! It amazes me how those two kept writing these brilliant yet short stories at such a fast rate. Imagine what they would have done if they had the typical 3-issue story arcs to write which are so commonplace today.

As for why I like Craig best, his style is simple and vivid. It has perfect facial expressions, yet doesn't have a lot of useless ink lines. Johnny expressed what he wanted to in a nice and simple method.

I have one question: Why stop distributing to newsstands? Whenever my local comic shop at the mall sells out of your comics (which they frequently do since they order such a small amount) I would walk to another wing and visit Waldenbooks, which always had the issue I was looking for. I hope that by eliminating newsstands, you're not losing an even bigger chunk of readership!

Joey Marchese
Union, NJ

Sauce for the goose is not always sauce for the gander, and distribution through newsstands was not working to our financial advantage at this time. We are STILL distributing to Waldenbooks, be sure and steer your civilian friends there or into comic shops, or have them contact us directly.

This month: HAUNT #3 and WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY #3. Next month: The 4th issues of CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Don't forget VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)!

We want letters! Write to:
CRIME
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
CRIME SUSPENSTORIES #3 (FEB 1951)

"Poison"	Johnny Craig
"The Giggling Killer"	Harvey Kurtzman
"Faced with Horror!"	Wally Wood
"Blood Red Wine!"	Graham Ingels

HEADING ILLO this time is by David Barber, Toledo, OH. He explained to me that this is me in a disguise. Makes sense to me! Here-with, the latest installment of my CRYPT-KEEPER'S...

PAGE OF

FINE ARTS #5

©?, OR,

EC COMICS: WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Started in 1950
They were very nifty
Of course I'm talking about EC.

Written by Gaines
Titles never mundane
There we have EC.

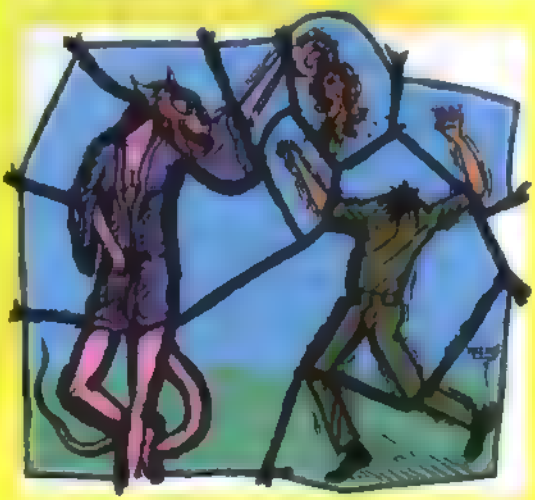
The Crypt-Keeper, cops and robbers
Aliens, monsters and hurtful clobbers
All happened regularly in EC.

We will never ever forget
The stories that they kept
Working on in the offices of EC.

Johnny Craige and Jack Kamens
Drawing stories of witches and shamans
Only at EC.

My time is up
I've said enough
About the magic in those books
Magic not found in crannies or nooks
I'm talking about EC.

Joey Marchese
Union, NJ



ROGUES' GALLERY

1) Tony Killebrew (don't mind if I do), Laurel, MT.
2) Rick Limacher, Victoria BC. That's Cousin Irv, the Crumb-Keeper!
3) David Rodriguez, Huntington PK, CA. You made me look sultry.

HOT DOG! TWO WIENERS!

In FINE ARTS #1, I offered the following incomplete limerick and challenged you FINE ARTerios to complete it:

> There was an old man in a cemetery
> Who wasn't inclined to be sedentary.
> He clawed himself out
> and declaimed with a shout,
> "****"

Two suggestions were head and shoulders above the others, and it was neck and neck but one nosed the other out (anatomically speaking). Here's the runner up, by Daniel Owen, Fairfax STN, VA:

> "'To what degree bored am I? Oh, very!"

Be sure and read the whole thing, and pick up the pace on the last line (but not so fast as to be speaking anatomically!).

Now, the absolute bestest one, by Scott Lawrence, Reading, MA:

> "'I'd rather be making a Bloody Mary!"

(Remember to read it fast for full effect! Pretend you're Billy deWolfe. No, not Billy the Wolf, the wolf; Billy deWolfe, the actor!) Beat that one, you tasteless poetasters! I proclaim Scott the Byron of the Bogeymen!

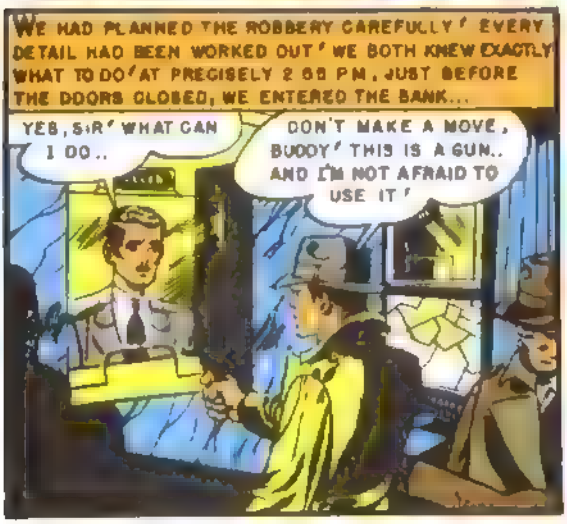
Now, as it all too quickly does, the end has come. I need to rest, anyway; my clobbers hurt.

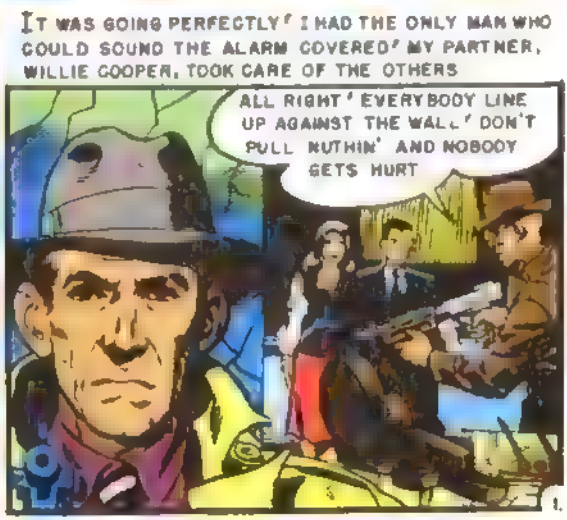
Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, doublespaced typewritten &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit!) to:

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S
PAGE OF FINE ARTS
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

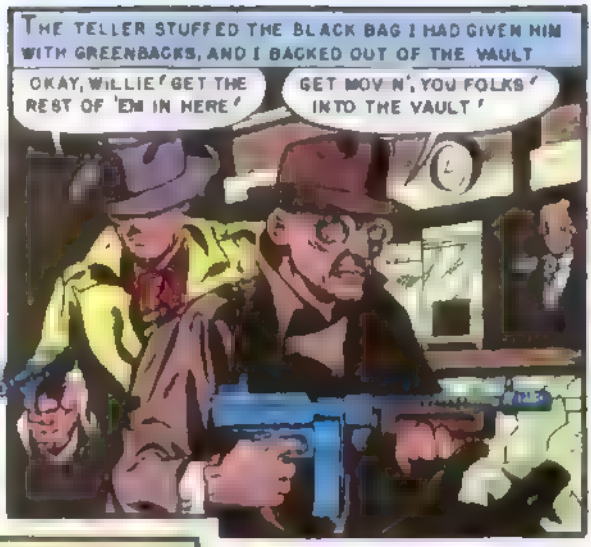
A BIT of stained glass from the transom window of the 'hommes jean', Lophedral Cathedral, Paris, France (NON!). Courtesy Merrick Mixson, Atlanta, GA.

FACED WITH
WOODY


WE HAD PLANNED THE ROBBERY CAREFULLY' EVERY DETAIL HAD BEEN WORKED OUT' WE BOTH KNEW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO' AT PRECISELY 2 55 P.M., JUST BEFORE THE DOORS CLOSED, WE ENTERED THE BANK...
YES, SIR' WHAT CAN I DO..
DON'T MAKE A MOVE, BUDDY' THIS IS A GUN.. AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO USE IT'


IT WAS GOING PERFECTLY' I HAD THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD SOUND THE ALARM COVERED' MY PARTNER, WILLIE COOPER, TOOK CARE OF THE OTHERS
ALL RIGHT' EVERYBODY LINE UP AGAINST THE WALL' DON'T PULL NUTHIN' AND NOBODY GETS HURT

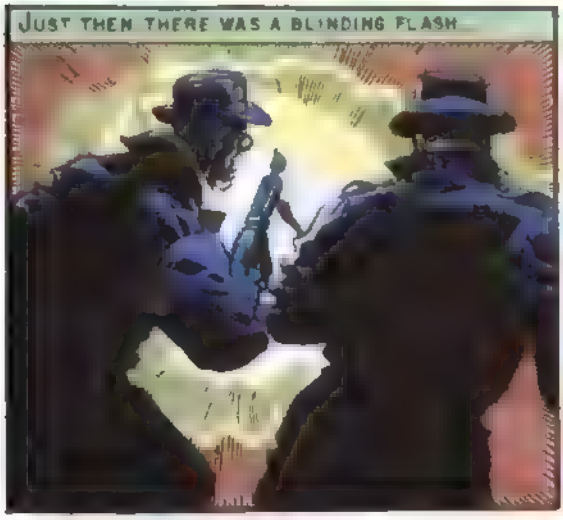
I FORCED THE TELLER WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF THE ALARM INTO THE HUGE VAULT.
FILL THIS SATCHEL WITH THE GREEN STUFF. MAKE IT SNAPPY!

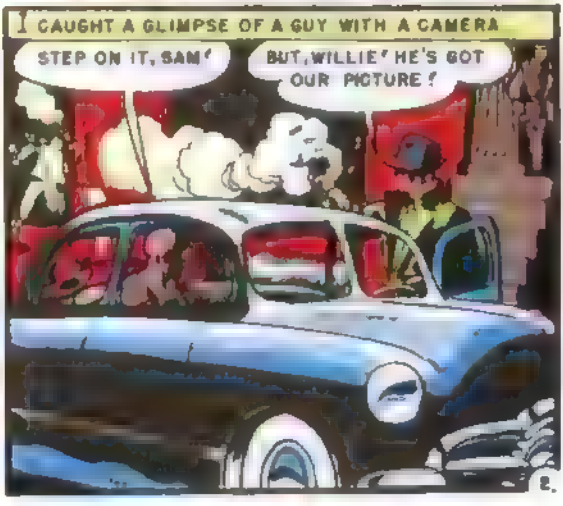

THE TELLER STUFFED THE BLACK BAG I HAD GIVEN HIM WITH GREENBACKS, AND I BACKED OUT OF THE VAULT
OKAY, WILLIE! GET THE REST OF 'EM IN HERE!
GET MOV'N', YOU FOLKS! INTO THE VAULT!

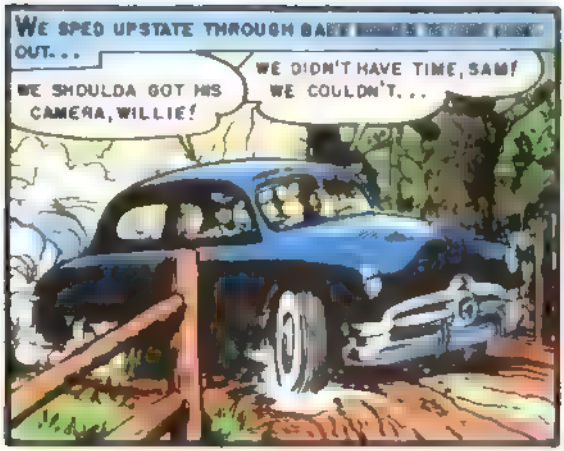
AS WE HERDED THEM INTO THE VAULT, ONE OF THE TELLERS PULLED A GUN
NO YOU DON'T

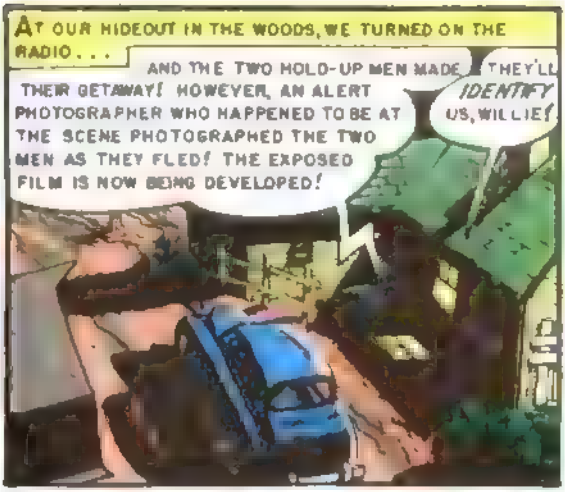
THE BULLET CAUGHT HIM IN THE CHEST AND HE PITCHED FORWARD... DEAD! ONE OF THE WOMEN SCREAMED...
SAM! THAT SHOT'LL BRING THE COPS! LET'S SCRAM!
YEAH! C'MON!

WE TORE OUT OF THE BANK! OUTSIDE A CROWD WAS BEGINNING TO FORM
OUTTA THE WAY!
ONE SIDE!

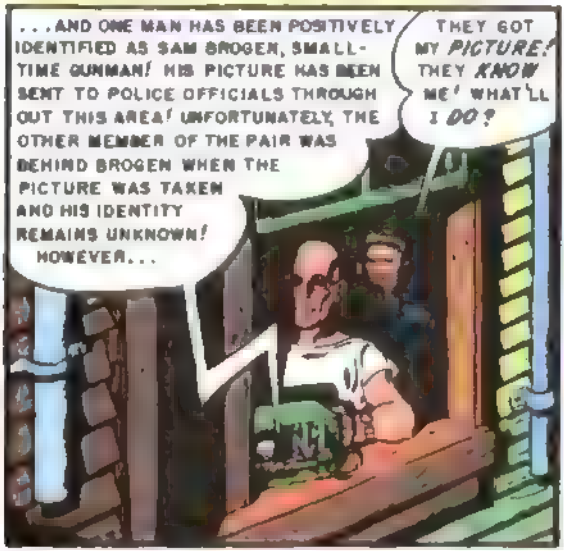

JUST THEN THERE WAS A BLINDING FLASH


I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF A GUY WITH A CAMERA
STEP ON IT, SAM!
BUT, WILLIE! HE'S GOT OUR PICTURE!

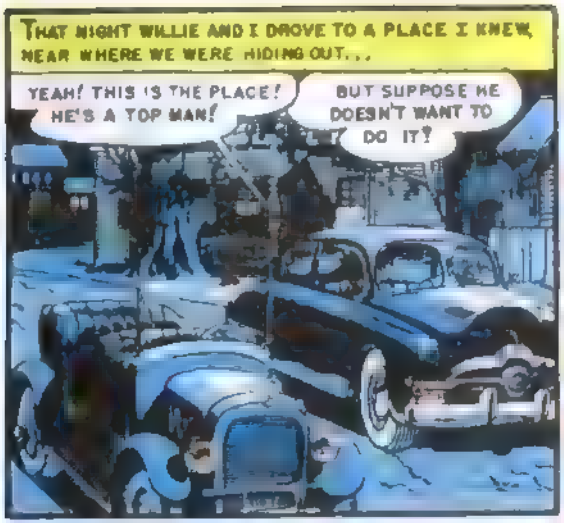



AT OUR HIDEOUT IN THE WOODS, WE TURNED ON THE RADIO...
AND THE TWO HOLD-UP MEN MADE THEIR GETAWAY! HOWEVER, AN ALERT PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAPPENED TO BE AT THE SCENE PHOTOGRAPHED THE TWO MEN AS THEY FLED! THE EXPOSED FILM IS NOW BEING DEVELOPED!
THEY'LL IDENTIFY US, WILLIE!

LATER...WE LISTENED TO ANOTHER REPORT...


...AND ONE MAN HAS BEEN POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS SAM BROGEN, SMALL-TIME GUNMAN! HIS PICTURE HAS BEEN SENT TO POLICE OFFICIALS THROUGH OUT THIS AREA! UNFORTUNATELY, THE OTHER MEMBER OF THE PAIR WAS BEHIND BROGEN WHEN THE PICTURE WAS TAKEN AND HIS IDENTITY REMAINS UNKNOWN! HOWEVER...
THEY GOT MY PICTURE! THEY KNOW ME! WHAT'LL I DO?

THEY'LL PLASTER IT IN EVERY NEWSPAPER IN THE COUNTRY! I'LL HAVE TO KEEP OUT OF SIGHT! I'D BE RECOGNIZED IF I SHOWED MY FACE!
M.. MAYBE WE OUGHT TO SPLIT UP THE TAKE AND SEPARATE, SAM!


THAT NIGHT WILLIE AND I DROVE TO A PLACE I KNEW, NEAR WHERE WE WERE HIDING OUT...
YEAH! THIS IS THE PLACE! HE'S A TOP MAN!
BUT SUPPOSE HE DOESN'T WANT TO DO IT?

WE GOT OUT OF THE CAR AND WALKED UP THE FLAGSTONE WALK TO THE DOOR...
WE'LL MAKE HIM DO IT!
OKAY, SAM! YOU'RE THE BOSS!

THE DOOR WAS OPENED BY A GREY-HAIRED OLD MAN...
YES, GENTLEMEN?
GET INSIDE, DOC!

WHY... WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
I GOT A LITTLE JOB FOR YOU, DOC! A LITTLE PLASTIC SURGERY!

I KNEW YOU SPENT YOUR VACATION HERE! THAT'S WHY I CAME! YOU'RE GONNA CHANGE MY FACE, DOC! UNDERSTAND?
I... I RECOGNIZE YOU! YOU'RE THE MAN THE POLICE ARE AFTER! YOU'RE...

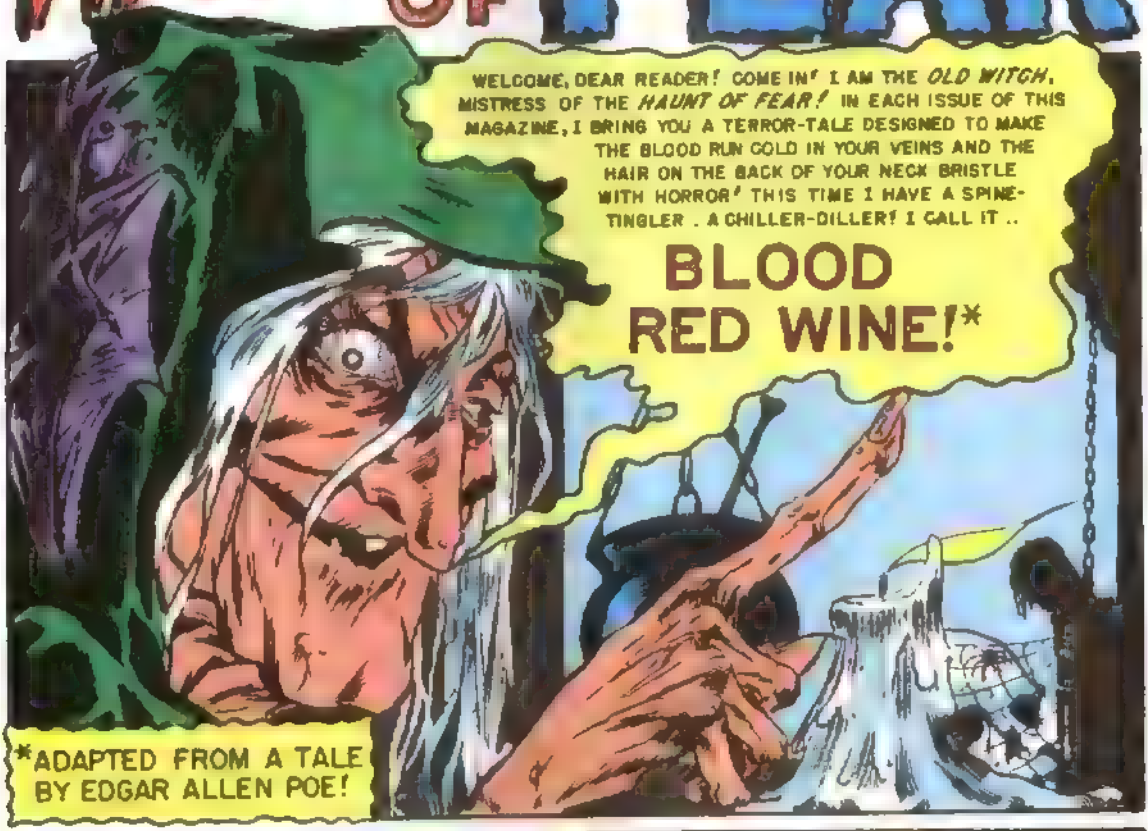
BROGEN! THAT'S THE NAME! YOUR PICTURE IS IN THE EVENING PAPER! YOU... YOU'RE A KILLER!
THAT'S RIGHT, DOC... AND IF YOU WANT TO STAY HEALTHY, YOU'LL DO WHAT I ASK!

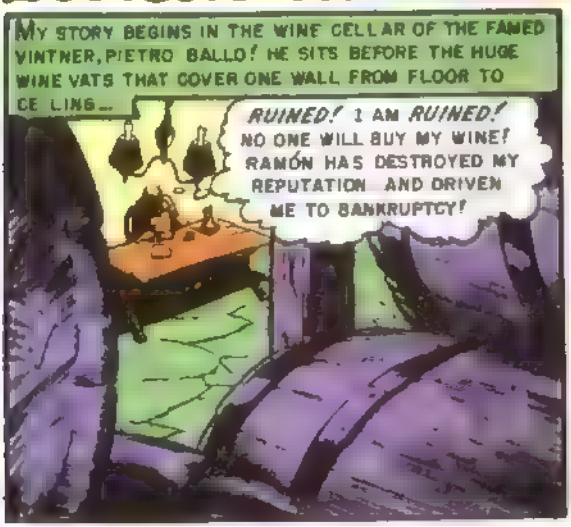
ALL RIGHT, MR. BROGEN! WHAT IS IT YOU WANT OF ME?
I WANT MY FACE CHANGED. SO I LOOK LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON!

BUT THAT IS A DIFFICULT OPERATION! I HAVE ONLY A LIMITED AMOUNT OF EQUIPMENT HERE! I... I... THINK I...
YOU'LL DO WITH WHAT YOU'VE *GOT*, DOC! NOW LET'S GET *STARTED!*
THE DOCTOR TOOK ME INTO A SMALL LABORATORY AND TOLD ME TO LIE DOWN ON A TABLE. .
I'LL HAVE TO PLACE YOU UNDER AN *ANAESTHETIC*, AS IT IS GOING TO BE *PAINFUL!*
YOU WATCH THAT HE DON'T DO NUTHIN' FUNNY, WILLIE!
THE NEXT THING I REMEMBER WAS THE SICKENING SMELL OF THE CHLOROFORM.. AND THEN I BLACKED OUT! WHEN I CAME TO, MY FACE WAS COVERED WITH BANDAGES...
THEN WHAT, DOC?
THE BANDAGES WILL HAVE TO STAY ON FOR ABOUT A WEEK!
WHY...THEN YOU'LL SEE YOUR NEW FACE!
ER... ANY TREATMENTS OR ANYTHING NEEDED?
NO...NONE AT ALL! THE BRUISES AND MARKS WILL EVENTUALLY GO AWAY!
THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO KNOW!
YOU... YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME?
THAT'S RIGHT, DOC! THANKS FOR THE JOB! HERE'S MY PAYOFF!
RAT TAT TAT
I --
9

HE...HE'S DEAD, SAM! LET'S GO!
WAIT, WILLIE! YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE!
SAM! YOU WOULDN'T... YOU...
AAGGGHH!
NOW NOBODY KNOWS ABOUT THIS PLASTIC SURGERY JOB! AND I CAN SPEND ALL THAT DOUGH...MYSELF!
I DROVE BACK, UNDER COVER OF THE NIGHT, TO THE HIDEOUT!
HAH, HAH! LET'S SEE! WHAT WILL I CALL MYSELF.
WHEN THE WEEK WAS UP..I REMOVED THE BANDAGES.
GEE.. I HOPE THE DOC MADE ME HANDSOME! THE WOMEN'LL GO CRAZY WHEN THEY SEE MY BANKROLL! I.
I CAUGHT MY BREATH! THEN I WAS SICK! I LOOKED AT MY FACE IN THE MIRROR!
GOOD LORD! THE DOC! HE... HE KNEW!
AAAAAAAAGH!
YES! DOC KNEW THAT I'D KILL HIM AFTER HE FINISHED HIS JOB! SO WHAT DID HE HAVE TO LOSE? HE MADE ME LOOK LIKE THIS! AND WILLIE. WILLIE MUST HAVE KNOWN, TOO! HE WATCHED THE DOC DO THIS TO ME! NOW I'VE GOT ALL THIS DOUGH... AND I CAN'T SPEND IT! I CAN'T GO OUT! PEOPLE WOULD TURN AWAY FROM ME IN DISGUST! WHAT SHOULD I DO? WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE ME AND LOOKED LIKE THIS! YES .. THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DO, TOO!

THE HAUNT OF FEAR

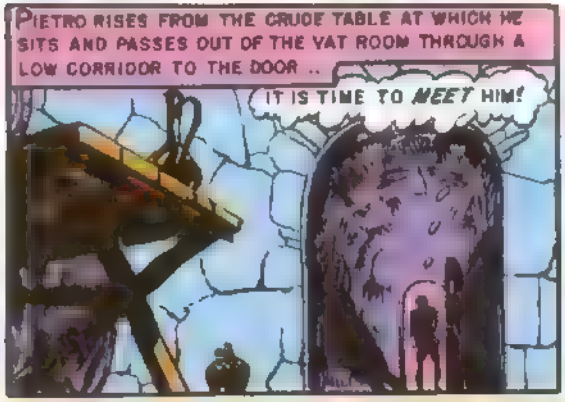

WELCOME, DEAR READER! COME IN! I AM THE *OLD WITCH*, MISTRESS OF THE *HAUNT OF FEAR!* IN EACH ISSUE OF THIS MAGAZINE, I BRING YOU A TERROR-TALE DESIGNED TO MAKE THE BLOOD RUN COLD IN YOUR VEINS AND THE HAIR ON THE BACK OF YOUR NECK BRISTLE WITH HORROR! THIS TIME I HAVE A SPINE-TINGLER . A CHILLER-DILLER! I CALL IT ..
BLOOD RED WINE!*
*ADAPTED FROM A TALE BY EDGAR ALLEN POE!

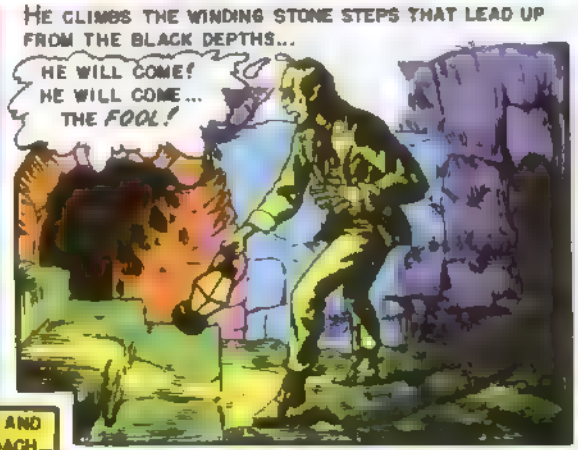

MY STORY BEGINS IN THE WINE CELLAR OF THE FAMED VINTNER, PIETRO BALLO! HE SITS BEFORE THE HUGE WINE VATS THAT COVER ONE WALL FROM FLOOR TO CE LING...
RUINED! I AM *RUINED!* NO ONE WILL BUY MY WINE! RAMÓN HAS DESTROYED MY REPUTATION AND DRIVEN ME TO BANKRUPTCY!

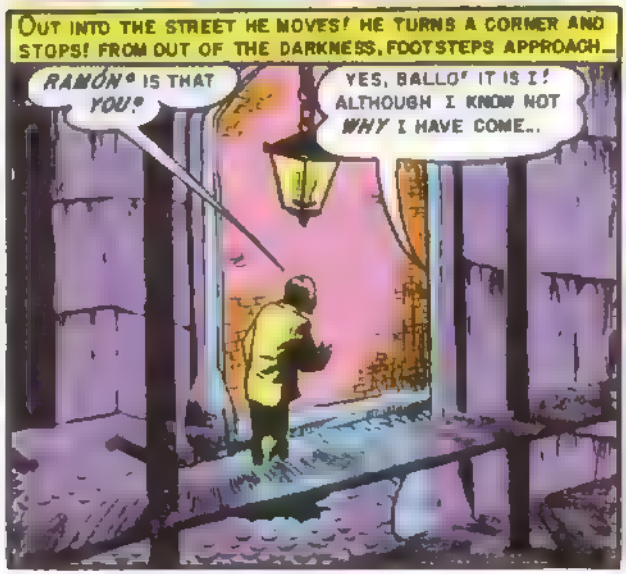
RAMÓN .. THE WINE CONNOISSEUR! BAH! HE IS STUPID.. A FOOL! HE DOES NOT KNOW GOOD WINE FROM BAD!

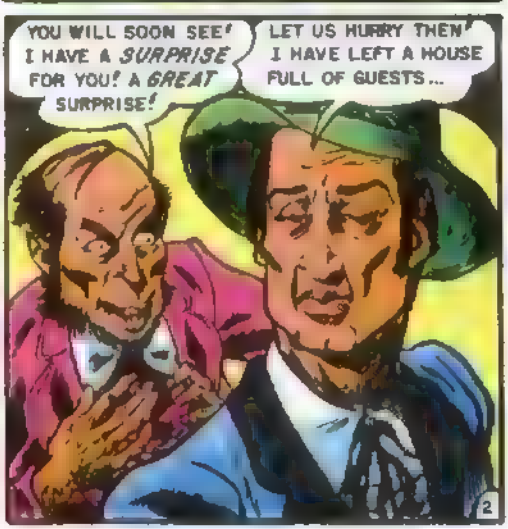
BUT HIS WORD.. CAN MAKE OR BREAK A VINTNER'S PRODUCT! AND HE HAS VOICED HIS DISLIKE FOR MINE! HE HAS RUINED ME! RUINED ME!

BUT SOON, I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE! HE WILL BE SORRY FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE! FOR SOON .. HE WILL DIE!

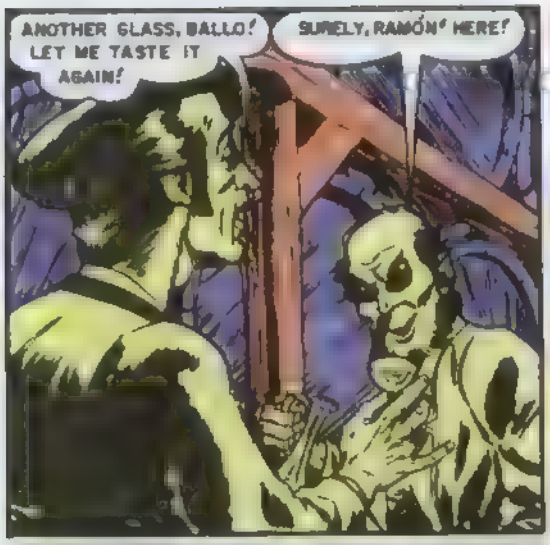

PIETRO RISES FROM THE CRUDE TABLE AT WHICH HE SITS AND PASSES OUT OF THE VAT ROOM THROUGH A LOW CORRIDOR TO THE DOOR ..
IT IS TIME TO MEET HIM!


HE CLIMBS THE WINDING STONE STEPS THAT LEAD UP FROM THE BLACK DEPTHS...
HE WILL COME! HE WILL COME... THE FOOL!

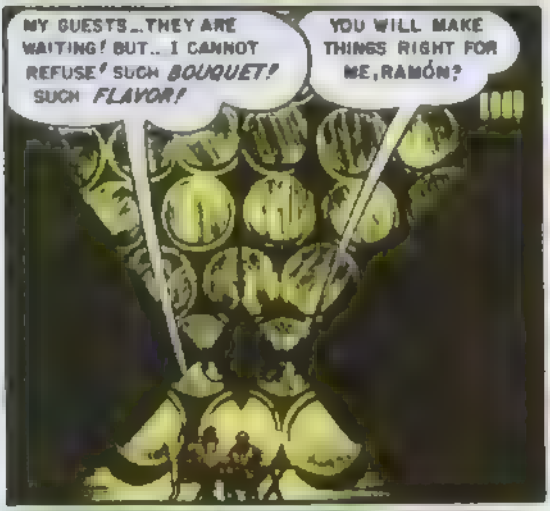

OUT INTO THE STREET HE MOVES! HE TURNS A CORNER AND STOPS! FROM OUT OF THE DARKNESS, FOOTSTEPS APPROACH...
RAMÓN? IS THAT YOU?
YES, BALLO! IT IS I! ALTHOUGH I KNOW NOT WHY I HAVE COME..

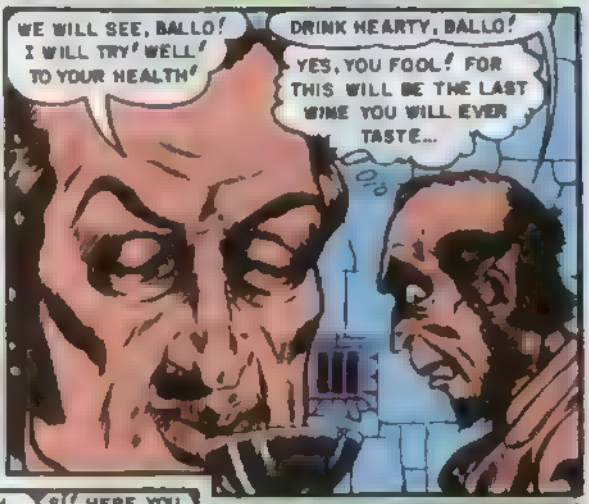

YOU WILL SOON SEE! I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU! A GREAT SURPRISE!
LET US HURRY THEN! I HAVE LEFT A HOUSE FULL OF GUESTS...
2

PIETRO TAKES RAMÓN'S ARM AND LEADS HIM TO A SMALL DOOR..
BUT, THIS GOES TO YOUR WINE CELLAR!
THAT IS MY SURPRISE!
DOWN THE STONE STEPS THAT CIRCLE INTO THE DARK DEPTHS OF BALLO'S WINE CELLAR, THE TWO MEN MOVE...
WHAT IS THIS NONSENSE, BALLO?
YOU WILL SOON SEE! YOU WILL SEE!
THROUGH THE CELLAR DOOR..THEN THE LOW CORRIDOR..
IF IT'S ABOUT YOUR WINE, BALLO, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME!
WAIT!
THEN THEY ARE IN THE NARROW, HIGH-CEILINGED ROOM THAT IS PIETRO BALLO'S WINE CELLAR...
THOSE VATS... PILED HIGH...ONE ON THE OTHER!
YES, RAMÓN! THAT IS MY WINE...MY WHOLE FORTUNE.. THERE!
AND I CANNOT SELL IT! NOT ONE DROP! BECAUSE YOU SAID IT WAS INFERIOR!
I AM SORRY, BALLO! BUT IT WAS! IT COULD NOT COMPARE WITH THE IMPORTED TYPE!
BALLO TAKES A GLASS FROM THE TABLE AND FILLS IT TO THE BRIM WITH WINE FROM ONE OF THE VATS...
YES! BUT THAT WAS SIX MONTHS AGO! SINCE THEN IT HAS HAD TIME TO AGE...TO SWEETEN! HERE! TASTE IT!
ALL RIGHT, BALLO! LET ME HAVE THE GLASS!
RAMÓN SIPS THE WINE GINGERLY! THEN HE TILTS THE GLASS AND DRAINS ITS CONTENTS! WHEN HE FINISHES.
MAMA MÍA! THIS WINE IS DELICIOUS! IT TASTES EXACTLY LIKE CHIANTI!
YOU SEE! YOU WERE WRONG, RAMÓN, WERE YOU NOT?
3


ANOTHER GLASS, BALLO! LET ME TASTE IT AGAIN!
SURELY, RAMÓN' HERE!

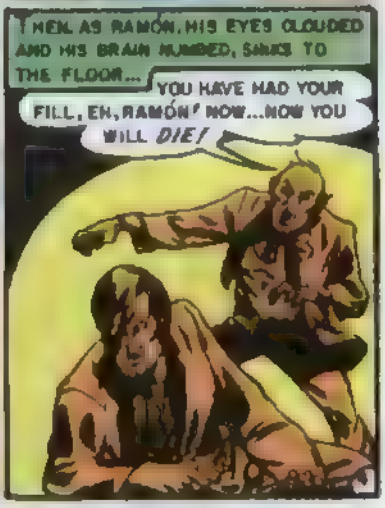
AGAIN THE FAMED WINE CONNOISSEUR DRAINS HIS GLASS
AH' DIVINE! THIS IS SO SIMILAR TO CHIANTI...I CANNOT TELL THE DIFFERENCE!
HERE, RAMÓN! ANOTHER...


MY GUESTS...THEY ARE WAITING! BUT... I CANNOT REFUSE! SUCH BOUQUET! SUCH FLAVOR!
YOU WILL MAKE THINGS RIGHT FOR ME, RAMÓN?


WE WILL SEE, BALLO! I WILL TRY' WELL' TO YOUR HEALTH'
DRINK HEARTY, BALLO!
YES, YOU FOOL! FOR THIS WILL BE THE LAST WINE YOU WILL EVER TASTE...

THE CANDLE ON THE TABLE BURNS LOW AS THE TIME PASSES' RAMÓN, NOW DRUNK FROM TOO MUCH OF THE DELICIOUS RED LIQUID STAGGERS ABOUT THE WINE CELLAR
AN' ALL THESE VATS.. ARE FULL OF THISH..
YES RAMON! FULL'

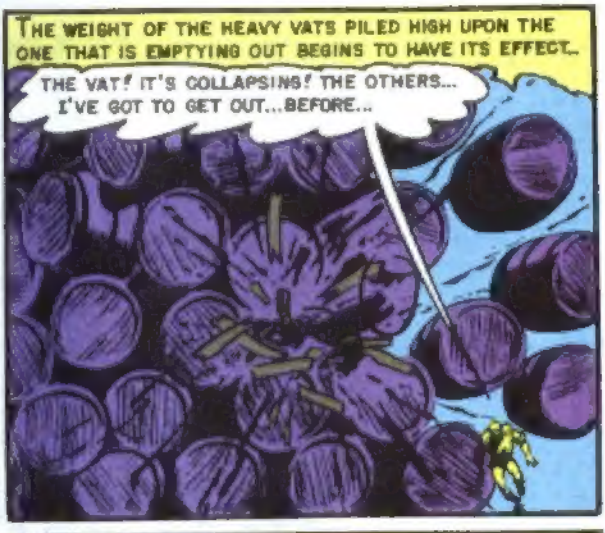
ANOTHER' LESH HAVE ANOTHER'
SI' HERE YOU ARE!


THEN, AS RAMÓN, HIS EYES CLOUDED AND HIS BRAIN NUMBED, SINKS TO THE FLOOR...
YOU HAVE HAD YOUR FILL, EH, RAMÓN' NOW...NOW YOU WILL DIE!

RAMÓN SHAKES HIS HEAD GROGGILY! HAS HE HEARD RIGHT? HE FEELS BALLO GRAB HIM ROUGHLY AND DRAG HIM TO THE CORNER .
WHASH GOIN' ON?
YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, RAMÓN!
YOU RUINED ME! NOW YOU WILL PAY! YES, RAMÓN! THAT WINE TASTES LIKE CHIANTI BECAUSE IT IS CHIANTI! I BOUGHT IT TO TRAP YOU!
THE SHOCK OF THE REALIZATION OF HIS PREDICAMENT CLEARS RAMÓN'S HEAD MOMENTARILY, AND HE REACHES INTO HIS POCKET...
WHAT THE...? A GUN!
YEAH... BALLO! I... DIDN'T... TRUST YOU... AND BROUGHT IT... IN CASE...
NO, YOU DON'T...
AMMM!
THE SHOT ECHOES THROUGH THE SMALL, HIGH ROOM! BUT THE BULLET PASSES HARMLESSLY OVER BALLO'S HEAD, AS HE DIVES AT RAMON..
OOOOF!
THE DRUNKEN WINE CONNOISSEUR IS NO MATCH FOR THE ENRAGED VINTNER! THE GUN CLATTERS ACROSS THE FLOOR AS HE FORCES RAMÓN TO THE WALL...
YES, RAMÓN! YOU WILL ROT HERE... WITH MY WINE!
BALLO, HIS EYES FLAMING WITH HATE, SECURES RAMÓN TO THE WALL BY MEANS OF CHAINS IMBEDDED IN THE MORTAR...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I'M GOING TO WALL YOU UP...
5

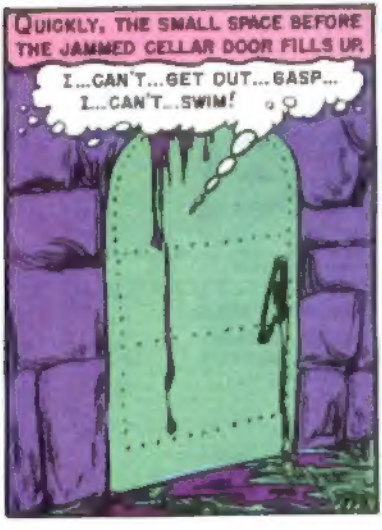
HORRIFED, THE HELPLESS RAMÓN WATCHES AS BALLO MIXES THE CEMENT...
AS YOU CAN SEE, RAMÓN, I'VE PLANNED EVERYTHING PERFECTLY!
THEN, BRICK BY BRICK, BALLO BEGINS TO BUILD A WALL... SEALING RAMON INTO THE NICHE WHEREIN HE IS CHAINED...
YOU CAN'T... IT'S NOT HUMAN... YOU WOULDN'T!
OH, WOULDN'T I?
SLOWLY.. HIGHER AND HIGHER THE WALL GROWS...
PLEASE, BALLO! HAVE PITY...
DID YOU HAVE PITY ON ME WHEN YOU BRANDED MY WINE?
SOON THERE WAS ONLY A FEW FEET LEFT...
I'LL MAKE IT UP, BALLO! I'LL PAY YOU... I'LL DO ANYTHING... ANYTHING!
HAH! NO, RAMÓN! IT IS TOO LATE!
THEN... THE LAST BRICK IS PUT INTO PLACE! AS THE DARKNESS CLOSES IN ON RAMÓN, HE OPENS HIS MOUTH AND SCREAMS...
A-A-A-A-H-H!
SCREAM, RAMÓN! NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU!
BALLO STEPS BACK TO SURVEY HIS WORK! FROM WITHIN, HE CAN HEAR RAMÓN SOBBING...
HAH! HAH! LISTEN TO HIM! CRYING... LIKE A BABY...
SUDDENLY, BALLO LOOKS DOWN...
WINE! ALL OVER THE FLOOR!

AND THEN BALLO SEES IT... THE HOLE IN THE VAT...
THE BULLET... MUST HAVE STRUCK THE WINE VAT! IT'S LEAKING... OUT...


THE WEIGHT OF THE HEAVY VATS PILED HIGH UPON THE ONE THAT IS EMPTYING OUT BEGINS TO HAVE ITS EFFECT..
THE VAT! IT'S COLLAPSING! THE OTHERS... I'VE GOT TO GET OUT... BEFORE...

WILDLY, BALLO RUSHES FROM THE ROOM INTO THE LOW CORRIDOR! BEHIND HIM, THERE IS A TREMENDOUS NOISE AS THE PYRAMID OF WINE VATS COMES CRASHING DOWN...
THE DOOR! IT'S LOCKED! IT MUST HAVE SNAPPED CLOSED FROM THE OUTSIDE!

BALLO IS SCREAMING NOW! THE WINE, RELEASED FROM THE MOUNTAIN OF CASKS THAT HELD IT, RUSHES AS A TORRENT INTO THE SMALL CORRIDOR...
NO! NO! I'M TRAPPED!
yAAAAAAH!


QUICKLY, THE SMALL SPACE BEFORE THE JAMMED CELLAR DOOR FILLS UP.
I...CAN'T...GET OUT...GASP... I...CAN'T...SWIM!

SOON THE SCREAMING STOPS! SMALL BUBBLES RISE FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE RED POOL AND SPREAD OUT IN A GROTESQUE DESIGN UPON ITS SHIMMERING SURFACE! FOR A MOMENT... THE WINE FAINTLY RESEMBLES BLOOD.

AND THAT'S MY STORY, DEAR READER. THE NEXT TIME YOU DRINK A GLASS OF CHIANTI, 1903, WON'T YOU RAISE A TOAST TO RAMÓN AND BALLO? I'M SURE THEY'D APPRECIATE IT. NEXT ISSUE, I'LL HAVE ANOTHER TERROR-TALE TO INTOXICATE YOU! ANOTHER CHILLER FROM MY COLLECTION HERE IN "THE HAUNT OF FEAR!" BE SURE AND COME, WON'T YOU?
7

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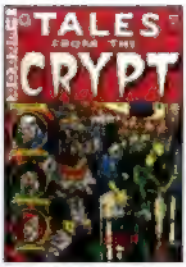

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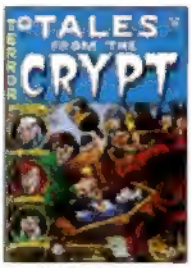

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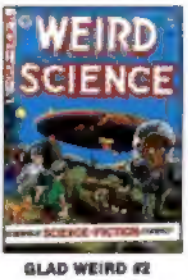

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